Expressing Political Opinions Online: How to Stop the Pain

by Della Wren

Copyright © 2023 Della Wren

All rights reserved.

For the perspective that gave me the ability to see my own power and begin to stand in it.
Thank you.

Additional Titles Available on Amazon:

The Art of Self-Mastery

Question Everything

To view the authors other work or to work with them directly, please visit:

Della Wren

To contact the author, please email:

mail@dellawren.com

Do You Express Political Opinions?

The Scenario

You're on social media and the topic is political. Guess what? It gets a little crazy. People argue and threaten each other. Inevitably people get blocked and banned. Sharing political opinions online in today's political climate is a game of roulette. You never really know what you're going to get back.

What do you do? You leave the group. You stop posting your opinions. You stay out of those circles. You find people who think like you so you don't have to worry about it. You steer clear of the whole thing because, honestly, you just don't want to deal with it.

You wish people weren't quite so crazy. You wish everybody wasn't so triggered. You wish people could learn how to disagree peacefully. But they can't and that bothers you. This scenario plays out on every platform across the Internet where people engage with each other and talk politics. So now, let's talk about the story we tell about this very common scenario that we've all found ourselves in at one point or another.

The Story You Tell

Like many people, you've made the choice to stop posting political opinions online. But the question is what story are you telling about why you did that?

You see there is nothing wrong with the choice. I've made the same choice myself for the most part. But what are you doing with it inside of yourself? Because that's what matters.

Where people typically go is to start feeling victimized by the outside world. They start blaming the crazy people for not letting them post. They start feeling like they have been made to be quiet because they can't share their opinions. Maybe it threatens their sense of safety on social media and they leave one or more platforms entirely.

The story that gets told is one that offers victimization, pain and blame. We victimize ourselves because we can't share our opinions without having them come back really mangled and twisted. We blame the crazy people for not letting us post our opinions because they simply attack us when we do. We feel the pain of having to keep quiet and not share our opinions. We feel censored and it causes us to argue with the choice to keep quiet. We tell this story and it keeps us stuck in the pain. To get out of it, we need to start to understand and accept the external world and that's next.

The External World

You don't have control over the external world. You can't change the reaction you get from the outside world when you post anything at all online. You lose control of your work when you post it. This is a common lesson that we teach kids when we talk about online safety. Even when your profile is set to "friends only", you never know who will see what you wrote or shared that you didn't intend to have access to it.

The big thing with the external world is that we don't have control over it. We can't control other people's reactions. We can't control what other people do or say. The fun thing about the online world is that people tend to feel a bit more emboldened sitting anonymously behind a computer screen. They tend to become keyboard warriors of sorts making crazy comments that they would never make in person.

The sense of safety that comes from sitting behind a keyboard tends to make people change how they show up in the world. They show up meaner and nastier than they would otherwise. All they are showing you is their own pain. They are reflecting back their anger at not being able to share their own views or their struggle with finding people that agree with them. They get volatile when they get told their opinion is wrong or doesn't match yours because they are frustrated with the outside world, just as you

are. They are expressing their anger by projecting it at you. You may be self-aware enough that you no longer do that. That's what makes it appear different. That's what makes it appear volatile and dangerous. The willingness to express the anger and pain unfiltered and unmetered is a little disconcerting. But that's all part of being hidden anonymously behind a screen.

The external world just is. The people in it just are who they are, doing what they are doing. We can't change that and we can't control it. That means we have to figure out where our point of control is, so let's talk about it.

Your Point of Control

Your point of control is within you. What does that mean?

You can't control the outside world. People do what they do. Things happen. It just is. Because you don't have control over it, it can give you a very strong feeling of victimization because the outside world seemingly controls you even though you don't control it. It feels unfair. From there we move to blame. We start to blame the external world for how we feel. We blame the external world for not allowing us to share our opinions freely. We feel victimized because we decide that it's a limitation that we can't change.

That story that we're telling isn't true. You have the power of choice. That's your point of control. It's not a victimized choice. Every thought, feeling, action, and word comes with the same choice. It's the story you tell about the choice that becomes the problem. You have two options in this scenario. You can share your opinion and accept that the outside world is going to do what it's going to do or you can refrain from sharing your opinion because you don't want to deal with what comes back to you when you share. Both choices are valid. Both choices are okay. There is nothing wrong with either choice. Your job is to stop making the choice the problem through the story you tell.

The choice isn't hooked to anything. It's not connected to your sense of safety, your sense of power, or your sense of freedom. It's simply a choice based on the idea that we accept that we can't control the outside world. We have to accept the outside world as it is and then choose our actions and words accordingly.

When we learn to manage ourselves within the experience, what we're doing is we're making choices that allow us to take some control over what comes back. By not sharing your opinion you don't get anything back because you're not putting anything out there. That's your point of control. You've decide you don't want to get the volatility back so you're not going to do anything to encourage it. Cool. You're not a victim of that. You've simply made a conscious choice.

The problem is you take the choice and you beat yourself up with it. You make yourself a victim of your own choice. You're not a victim of your own choice. You can share. You just have to accept that you're going to get volatility back. Can you be okay with that? If so, then keep sharing!

The story just keeps you stuck in a loop because what you want is the choice to share without the volatility. You want to control what comes back so that you can share freely. You don't like the options that you have. This makes you argue with the choices you have. That's what creates the loop.

What's the loop hinged on? Your lack of acceptance of the outside world as it is. You're still trying to change it, but you can't. You're afraid of what happens if you stop trying to change it. You're afraid of what happens if you just accept that this is the way it is. You think you need to fight that battle at the expense of your own internal sense of well-being.

You don't need to fight the battle. That's not to say that you can't take on a cause and work to change how people show up, show people how to disagree in a non-volatile way, and make social media a more friendly environment to be in, because you can. The trick is you have to decide to do that. The thing is you don't because you don't actually want to take on the cause. Instead you just use it as a reason to beat yourself up,

victimize yourself, and make yourself feel like crap. That's not helpful to you nor is it solving anything. It's definitely not changing what's happening around you either.

To retain your point of control via making a choice about how to feel, think, say, or do without victimizing yourself or blaming anything, you have to accept the outside world as it is. You are separate from the experience. You are not the experience you're having. You can't change what goes on around you, except through managing your own thoughts, feelings, words, and actions. By managing those you have some control over what happens next. Particularly in this scenario, by not offering opinions online, you retain complete control over what you get back because when you don't post, nobody has anything to comment on. The problem in reality, is solved. But you're still arguing with it, aren't you? You're still hooked on the idea that you should be able to share and control what you get back. So, let's keep going.

The Argument with It is Fear

What happens if we all stop sharing? What happens if we're all "forced" to be quiet?

Nobody is forcing anybody into anything. Nobody forced you to stop sharing. You decided to stop sharing. The feeling of force comes from your perception of not having control over the response you get from sharing.

The fear is based on acceptance or lack of it. Acceptance means you're okay with the outside world as it is. You simply decide whether you're willing to take on the blow back that comes from sharing political opinions online. That's where acceptance is found. I know what the outside world is going to do, but I feel like it's more important for me to share my opinions, so I'm going to stop worrying about what comes back to me when I do that.

The reality is that there are plenty of political commentators out there that have done just that. Making the choice to share anyway doesn't necessarily have to turn you into a political commentator, it's just showing you that the choice is a valid option. It also shows you that you don't have to beat yourself up with it or take on what other people are saying. You do not have to be a victim of your reality. You can share freely, accept that people aren't going to like it, understand that that's their thing, and leave them

where they are. Let them disagree with you, call you names, yell at you, whatever they are going to do, just allow that to be there without making yourself a victim of it. You don't need to defend your political point of view. You don't need to engage in that argument.

Notice that we're still making choices. Now we're making choices about how to respond to people that offer us volatility. I'm making the choice to engage or not. I'm making the choice to defend myself or not. I'm making the choice to be wounded or not. It's all a choice. The cool part of the online experience is that you have time to think. You have time to question your response. Nobody is sitting there waiting for you to say something. You have time to make those choices consciously before replying, if you reply at all.

You argue that you shouldn't have to make those choices to begin with. You're still making yourself a victim of the outside world. You're still trying to control it. Why? The idea that you get to keep making choices means you still have internal control. It means you still have your point of power intact. Why are you arguing with that? Being able to make those choices is a good thing. The only problem is your perception of why you're making those choices.

What you don't want to accept is that you get to and you should be making those choices all the time in every situation you find yourself in. That's self-awareness. That's self-mastery. What do you end up arguing with? Your own sense of personal responsibility. Your own willingness to manage yourself within the experience.

You don't want to do it. Why? Because it's hard. The pain is easier until it's not. The pain is easier until you're so exhausted from being in pain that you have no choice. The pain is easier until it isolates you from everything and everyone around you. The pain is easier until its overwhelming and potentially life-threatening.

I get that. I see that. I recognize it because that's part of my story. One of the things that I had to do to heal is drop these stories about what the world was making me do. I had to stop making myself a victim of my reality by changing my perception of things.

This is one huge perspective shift that I had to make. I had to start seeing things in a way that didn't cause pain.

The experience might be painful. What the person says in response to you may in fact hurt your feelings. That's the pain of the experience. The story you make up about why the person reacted that way and how it made you feel adds an additional layer of pain. But that layer of pain is self-created through your perspective. It's not part of the experience. Do you see the difference?

Everything I ever took on from other people was self-created pain. I created my own pain through my own perception of what they were saying and doing. Even if what they said or did hurt my feelings, my perspective added a layer of pain that didn't come from the experience. It came from me. It was self-created pain.

Shifting my perspective immediately allowed me to let everybody else off the hook. It gave me a personal sense of power or control over the experience. Suddenly my reactions and responses determined what happened next to some degree. It meant I always had a choice. I never had to be victimized by my experience again. That was brilliant for me because it's one of the foundational reasons I was able to heal the powerlessness that I felt.

Once I understood that my thoughts, words, feelings, and actions were helping to shape my experience in a way that I had control over, I immediately took control. I still can't control what other people are doing and even with the best of intentions, I may still get a bad reaction from the other person, but at least I'm managing myself. That's the key to your power right there.

You do the best you can in terms of your reactions and responses. You accept that people are going to do what they are going to do. You've taken control where you had the ability to do so and you left the rest. That's all you can do. After that it's out of your control.

You can't make that a frustrating experience for yourself. You can't make that a problem for you to solve because you can't solve it. There won't always be a better way

to manage it. You may still find you run into trouble from time to time because there is no perfect response. Sometimes in questioning it after the fact, it'll just come down to the idea that you did what you could and it still didn't work. The goal here is to make that okay. Again, it comes back to accepting that we don't have complete control. We accept the limitation as part of the human experience and we don't beat ourselves up with it. We're not a victim of it. It's just simply how things work on planet Earth.

Shift Your Perspective

I offered you a scenario. We told stories about that scenario. We understand that we can't control the external world, so as a result we have to find our point of control within every experience. Then we argued with whole thing because those arguments need to be worked through so that you move forward with this. Now let's talk about what that shift in perspective does for us.

Freedom, baby! Freedom to just simply be in your own life and in your own skin. It offers acceptance, peace, a point of control, and a bit of separation from the world around you. For those that want to argue that everything is connected, I agree with you. We all came from the same pot of stardust. However, the inter-connected perspective can be a frustrating one for some; it was for me. If I'm connected to you and there is no separation that means I need to control you in order to manage me. That doesn't work, does it?

The way I manage this is that I accept that there is both a spiritual or soul level and an Earth-bound human level. The soul level is where the inter-connectedness plays out. The human level is where separation occurs. I allow both to be true simultaneously and that offers me the ability to do the work I do. It gives me the sense of autonomy that allows me to create my own life my own way. While we're in human form, we need that.

That feeling of needing to conform causes a lot of arguments within us. But it doesn't need to be like that if you can offer yourself a bit of separation from the world around you.

What we're shifting is how we see what happens. We're not shifting what happened. We aren't making up a story about how that bad experience was actually really good. We aren't ignoring any pain. What we're doing is we're recognizing the difference between the pain of the actual experience and the self-created pain that gets formed through the stories we tell and the arguments we have with the experience.

If we simply stopped telling stories and stopped arguing with things, the pain of the experience would come and go pretty quickly. But usually we don't do that because we get stuck in these stories and we like to argue with things. We're a little addicted to pain, quite frankly. We'll invent it. We defend it. We hold onto it. We identify with it. Then we get mad at it and frustrated by it because it stops us from living the life we want and we don't feel good when we're in it. Then somebody offers you a way out of the pain, but you get mad and defend the pain even more.

The shift in perspective is what gets us out of this loop. What you're really understanding is that you don't have to make yourself a victim of your life or the choices your life offers you. The victimization comes from a feeling of limitation. It's the idea that I can't do what I want because if I do it offers me pain. It doesn't have to offer you pain though. You just have to let go of the argument with what comes back to you in terms of other people's reactions. By putting some separation in there, making other people responsible for their own stuff, doing the best we can to manage ourselves and not unconsciously create more pain, we can free ourselves to do our own thing and make our own choices.

A tiny shift in how you see yourself within the world around you changes everything. The shift comes through our ability to stop making ourselves a victim of our own lives. We're not victims. The experiences are simply happening. While they may offer some pain, the majority of what you feel gets created by you through the stories you tell about

what happened.

When we're talking about posting political opinions on social media, you can't make yourself a victim of other people's responses. You're free to post your opinion. You just have to learn to be okay with what you get back. Remember, you don't need to defend yourself. You don't need to argue with it. You just need to allow people to do what they are going to do and not worry about it.

There is power in this. There is freedom in this perspective. It opens you up to the power of being able to do your own thing. It's also a massive part of being able to manage yourself within the experience without needing to control the experience. The way that works is that you're no longer victimizing yourself or blaming anybody for anything, so your reaction to other people is different than it would be if you were defending yourself or arguing with it. Now you've taken control over your response. You're making a conscious choice to not offer more pain.

As you get better at this, your relationships will begin to change a bit. People will see the change in your responses to them. At first they might not like it because they were used to some level of dysfunction from you. But over time they will adjust and they will start to offer their own ideas and opinions more freely because they won't have to worry about your reaction anymore. It frees people to be more open with you, to let down their own guards and shift their own boundaries. No, this doesn't happen over night, but it will happen if you stay there and you do the work.

Even if you react badly, which you probably will because I certainly still do sometimes, if you're willing to own that, it won't have a negative impact on what's happening. It will actually improve the relationship further. You're creating a massive shift in your relationships that will ultimately improve your relationships with people. The difference will be astounding to you when you look back at it after some time has passed.

Your freedom to shift your perspective is not dependent on other people. It's dependent on your willingness to stay out of the argument with it. When people try to drag you back in, you have to stay there. When they upset you, you have to own that.

You don't make people change. You just don't go backwards. You wait for people to eventually catch up to you. Over time, it works out. The relationships improve and things get better. At first though, it's probably going to be a little frustrating as people will offer you plenty of pain. But if you can stay there and leave the pain where it belongs - with them - you can get through that part too. Then it's downhill from there.

What you'll see is that it affects every aspect of your life. It's every relationship you have whether online or offline. It truly does change how you show up in the world when you stop arguing with it and defending yourself from it.

You can free yourself to share whatever you want if you really want to. The question is only whether or not you're willing to do the work. I've offered you a way through it. Can you shift your perspective? Can you stop seeing yourself as a victim of the social media world? Can you simply allow things to be as they are and then shift yourself within that?

That's how you manage yourself in the experience. That's how I manage myself. That's how I choose to show up. I've had to get okay with the same things, not with politics, but with this kind of stuff because I'm challenging people's perspectives and some folks just don't like that. Some days, I hear about it! That's okay because that's part of my role. It comes with the territory in a sense. I'm opening myself up to it on purpose, but then I've also taught myself to manage it when it happens, so that I can open myself up to it and not be wounded by it.

Is that what you want? You have the power to make that happen. It just requires you to shift your perspective so that you can learn to manage yourself within the experience without ever trying to control or manage the experience itself.